

**IN THE UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF DELAWARE**

In re:

BIG LOTS, INC., *et al.*,

Debtors.¹

Chapter 11

Case No. 24-11967 (JKS)

(Jointly Administered)

CERTIFICATE OF PUBLICATION

I, Rohany Tejada, depose and say that I am employed by Kroll Restructuring Administration LLC ("Kroll"), the claims and noticing agent for the Debtors in the above-captioned chapter 11 cases.

This Certificate of Publication includes certification verifying that the *Notice of Deadlines to File Certain Claims*, as conformed for publication, was published on November 22, 2024, in the national edition of the *The Wall Street Journal*, as described in the affidavit attached hereto as **Exhibit A**.

Dated: November 25, 2024

/s/ Rohany Tejada
Rohany Tejada

¹ The debtors and debtors in possession in these chapter 11 cases, along with the last four digits of their respective employer identification numbers, are as follows: Great Basin, LLC (6158); Big Lots, Inc. (9097); Big Lots Management, LLC (7948); Consolidated Property Holdings, LLC (0984); Broyhill LLC (7868); Big Lots Stores - PNS, LLC (5262); Big Lots Stores, LLC (6811); BLBO Tenant, LLC (0552); Big Lots Stores - CSR, LLC (6182); CSC Distribution LLC (8785); Closeout Distribution, LLC (0309); Durant DC, LLC (2033); AVDC, LLC (3400); GAFDC LLC (8673); PAFDC LLC (2377); WAFDC, LLC (6163); INFDC, LLC (2820); Big Lots eCommerce LLC (9612); and Big Lots F&S, LLC (3277). The address of the debtors' corporate headquarters is 4900 E. Dublin-Granville Road, Columbus, OH 43081.

Exhibit A

AFFIDAVIT

STATE OF NEW JERSEY)
) ss:
CITY OF MONMOUTH JUNCTION, in the COUNTY OF MIDDLESEX)

I, Keith Oehsner, being duly sworn, depose and say that I am the Advertising Clerk of the Publisher of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL, a daily national newspaper of general circulation throughout the United States, and that the notice attached to this Affidavit has been regularly published in THE WALL STREET JOURNAL for National distribution for

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and that the foregoing statements are true and correct to the best of my knowledge.



Sworn to before me this
25 day of November 2024



Notary Public



TECHNOLOGY

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Altman's Startup Hires Former X Executive

Pickles joins Tools for Humanity in a newly created role as head of policy

By MAURO ORRU

Tools for Humanity named X's former vice president of global affairs as head of policy, the latest executive from what was formerly Twitter to join the startup co-founded by OpenAI Chief Executive Sam Altman.

The San Francisco-based company appointed Nick Pickles as chief policy officer in a newly created role to liaise with governments and regula-

tors as its World Network venture, which scans people's eyes in exchange for cryptocurrency tokens, faces scrutiny. He reports to Alex Blania, co-founder and head of the startup.

The British executive spent a decade at X, becoming the go-to person for heads of state and regulators that took aim at the social-media network over compliance or policy issues. He left Elon Musk's company in early September.

"One of the issues that I dealt with every day at X, and Twitter before that, was how trust in the public conversation is being undermined because of the growing issue of bot-automated accounts,"

Pickles said in an interview. "I could see the acceleration of the problem where people didn't know if they were speaking to another person and how that was damaging online discourse," he said.

Last year, Elon Musk floated the idea of charging users of his X platform to eradicate fake and spam accounts.

Now, Pickles plans to be the face of Tools for Humanity in its bid to develop technology that helps distinguish humans from artificial intelligence while safeguarding their privacy.

Pickles is the latest former X executive to join Tools for Humanity following the ap-

pointments of Rebecca Hahn as chief communications officer and Damien Kieran as head of privacy.

The company said Thursday that Kieran's role, announced in early July, had been expanded to chief privacy and chief legal officer.

Pickles's pivot to the startup comes after Musk escalated his legal feud with Altman's OpenAI and Microsoft, claiming the companies colluded to eliminate competition in an attempt to dominate the development of artificial intelligence.

His addition to the team underscores efforts from the startup to invest in compliance as regulators in some ju-

risdictions cast doubt on claims that its technology can differentiate between humans and bots in the AI age without privacy violations.

Tools for Humanity is behind the 2023 launch of World Network, a venture formerly known as Worldcoin, that lets users download a wallet app with a digital identity known as World ID.

To get their identity verified, users stand in front of a basketball-sized chrome device known as the orb that relies on sensors to scan their irises "to verify humanness and uniqueness," Worldcoin

cryptocurrency tokens are then distributed to users in countries where they are legally available.

However, the company's processing of biometric data raised eyebrows. It has been raided in Hong Kong, blocked in Spain, fined in Argentina and investigated in Kenya.

Earlier this year, the venture agreed to give users the option to have their biometric data deleted permanently following consultations with third-party privacy and security experts in a bid to allay concerns from regulators.

"The reason for creating a chief policy officer role is a direct signal of how seriously we take those conversations," Pickles said. "Whenever you have a new technology, people will always have questions."



Alibaba's domestic e-commerce unit touted 'robust growth' during this year's Singles Day. Subway ads in China for the event.

Alibaba Integrates Its E-Commerce Operations Into Single Business Group

By JIAHUI HUANG

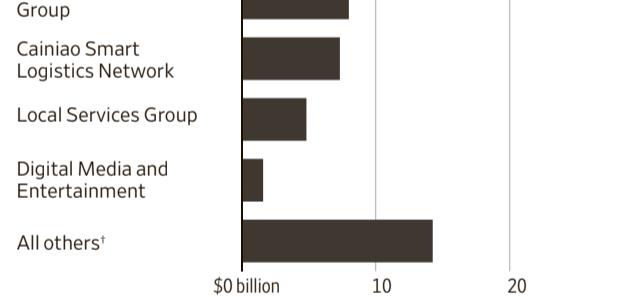
Alibaba Group formed a new business group to integrate its domestic and overseas e-commerce platforms, in the company's biggest restructuring move after it split into six divisions last year.

The company said in a filing Thursday that the new e-commerce business group will include Taobao and Tmall Group, Alibaba International Digital Commerce Group, 1688 Marketplace, Idle Fish and others. Alibaba appointed Fan Jiang as chief executive for the business group, according to the filing.

"E-commerce and AI technology are the most critical development areas for Alibaba Group," Alibaba Chief Executive Eddie Wu wrote in an internal letter Thursday seen by The Wall Street Journal.

The new business group will better leverage the company's e-commerce resources and support small and medium-size companies in expanding in do-

Alibaba segment revenue*



*For the six-month period ended Sept. 30. [†]Includes unallocated revenue.

Source: the company

mestic and overseas markets, Wu said in the letter.

Once a darling of Wall Street and the dominant player in China's e-commerce industry, Alibaba has faced challenges boosting revenue growth amid a slowing Chinese economy and intensifying competition.

over two decades by entrepreneur Jack Ma.

Alibaba reported lower-than-expected quarterly revenue for the fiscal second quarter. Sales at Alibaba's core domestic e-commerce business, Taobao and Tmall Group, rose 1.4% to 98.99 billion yuan, equivalent to \$13.66 billion, from 97.65 billion yuan a year earlier.

Earlier this month, Alibaba's domestic e-commerce unit said it achieved "robust growth" in gross merchandise volume and a record number of active buyers during this year's Singles Day, China's biggest online shopping festival. The company hasn't disclosed the overall GMV figure, a measure of total online sales, for the monthlong event in recent years.

The company has invested heavily in its domestic and international units in recent quarters, aiming to regain its past market dominance.

—Raffaele Huang

and Tracy Qu contributed to this article.

Baidu Revenue Falls Amid Weak Demand

By TRACY QU

Chinese search-engine giant Baidu reported lower revenue for the second straight quarter as advertising demand continued to be weak amid an economy struggling to regain momentum.

The Beijing-based internet company said Thursday that third-quarter revenue fell 2.6% from a year earlier to 33.56 billion yuan, equivalent to \$4.63 billion, roughly in line with analysts' estimates of 33.88 billion yuan.

Net profit rose 14% to 7.63 billion yuan, exceeding the 5.02 billion yuan expected by analysts in a FactSet poll.

Once considered one of China's important technology titans alongside Alibaba and Tencent, Baidu has been facing pressure on both the profit and revenue lines. China's biggest search-engine operator has been seeking new growth engines in fields such as artificial intelligence, cloud computing and self-driving technology.

It unveiled a number of new AI applications this month, including a text-to-image generation technology. Its Ernie Bot is one of China's most popular ChatGPT-style chatbots.

"Baidu Core's flattish third quarter top line reflected the ongoing weakness in our online marketing business, offset by the growth of our AI Cloud business. Our strong AI capabilities are gaining broader market recognition, as evidenced by increasing adoption of ERNIE," said Robin Li, the company's co-founder and chief executive.

Sales from online-marketing services, which make up more than half of overall revenue, fell 5.8%. Revenue from the company's iQIYI video-streaming service dropped about 10%.

Adjusted net profit, which excludes the effects of share-based compensation expenses, fair-value changes in long-term investments, and disposal gains and losses, among other things, declined 19% to 5.89 billion yuan. Analysts had expected 6.27 billion yuan, according to FactSet.

Alibaba last week reported a roughly 5% increase in revenue for the September quarter, below market expectations.

Tencent also posted single-digit quarterly revenue growth, with net profit jumping 47%.

Baidu's American depositary receipts fell 5.9% to \$81.62 each on Thursday.



The search-engine giant displays Xiaodou AI smart glasses.

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BANKRUPTCIES

IN THE UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF DELAWARE

Chapter 11
BIG LOTS, INC., et al.,
Debtors

NOTICE OF DEADLINES TO FILE CERTAIN CLAIMS

To all persons or entities with claims against the following debtors: Big Lots, Inc. (Case No. 24-11967 (JKS); ADVIC, LLC (Case No. 24-11981 (JKS); Big Lots eCommerce LLC, Case No. 24-11980 (JKS); Big Lots F&S, LLC, Case No. 24-11984 (JKS); Big Lots Management, LLC, Case No. 24-11989 (JKS); Big Lots Stores - CSR, LLC, Case No. 24-11976 (JKS); Big Lots Stores - PNS, LLC, Case No. 24-11970 (JKS); Big Lots Stores, LLC, Case No. 24-11973 (JKS); BLBO Tenant, LLC, Case No. 24-11972 (JKS); Broylhill LLC, Case No. 24-11971 (JKS); Closeout Distribution, LLC, Case No. 24-11978 (JKS); Consolidated Properties Holdings, LLC, Case No. 24-11968 (JKS); CSC Distribution, LLC, Case No. 24-11974 (JKS); Duran's DC, LLC, Case No. 24-11975 (JKS); GAFD, LLC, Case No. 24-11976 (JKS); Great American, LLC, Case No. 24-11969 (JKS); INFER, LLC, Case No. 24-11977 (JKS); PAFD, LLC Case No. 24-11982 (JKS); and WAFD, LLC Case No. 24-11979 (JKS) (collectively the "Debtors"). On September 9, 2024 (collectively, the "Petition Date"), the Debtors each filed voluntary petitions for relief under chapter 11 of the Bankruptcy Code (the "Chapter 11 Cases") in the United States Bankruptcy Court for the District of Delaware (the "Court").

The Court established claim filing deadlines as follows: (i) all persons or entities with a claim against any of the Debtors that arose before the Petition Date, no matter how remote or contingent, **MUST FILE A PROOF OF CLAIM on or before Monday, November 19, 2024**; (ii) all claims must be submitted **as to be actually asserted on or before the applicable deadline to be timely filed**.

Copies of the Bar Date Order, the Debtors' schedules of assets and liabilities and other documents and information regarding the Debtors' Chapter 11 Cases are available free of charge at <https://cases.ra.kroll.com/BigLots> or by calling (844) 217-1398 (toll-free) or +1 (646) 809-2073 (international). Consult the Bar Date Order for additional details on whether you are required to file a proof of claim, as well as instructions and procedures for completing and filing proofs of claim. Do not contact the Clerk of Court for legal advice.

ANY PERSON OR ENTITY THAT IS REQUIRED TO TIMELY FILE A PROOF OF CLAIM BUT FAILS TO DO SO SHALL NOT BE TREATED AS A CREDITOR WITH RESPECT TO SUCH CLAIM FOR THE PURPOSE OF VOTING AND DISTRIBUTION IN THE DEBTORS' CHAPTER 11 CASES.

BY ORDER OF THE COURT

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PDD Sales Growth Loses Steam

Continued from page B1
geopolitical risks. U.S. legislators and regulators have directed a series of challenges at Temu and Shein as well as at Chinese-owned TikTok. While Temu is growing fast outside the U.S., its downloads have declined from the peak in July 2023, according to Morgan Stanley analysts.

After two years of operation, Temu has 49 million monthly active users in the U.S., or 74% of Amazon's U.S. user base, according to Morgan Stanley.

PDD's third-quarter earnings were 12% lower than forecasts by analysts polled by S&P Global Market Intelligence.

PDD executives cautioned in August that profit would suffer as the company invested to address supply-chain inefficiencies and reduce fees for merchants. Chen said Thursday the company's third-quarter financial results were within the company's expectations.

Over the past year, executives have sought to tamp

down investors' expectations for never-ending profit growth, cautioning about regulatory and compliance uncertainties in global markets where it operates.

"The previous consensus that PDD would continue its fast-growth trajectory has been broken," said Jianggan Li, founder of Momentum Works, a Singapore-based venture consulting firm. "The company probably is seeking to manage investors' short-term expectations in a more delicate way."

In China, a series of stimulus measures Beijing introduced in September to revive the slowing economy have presented both opportunities and challenges for the company, executives said.

After two years of operation, Temu has 49 million monthly active users in the U.S., or 74% of Amazon's U.S. user base, according to Morgan Stanley.

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While the new measures were intended to fuel consumption, Co-CEO Zhao Jiazen, in a rare acknowledgement of the company's limitations, said the company's limited operational capabilities meant it missed out on opportunities to leverage the stimulus. To keep prices competitive with rivals, Zhao said PDD incurred higher costs compared with peers.

The company on Thursday continued to tout its efforts to reduce fees for merchants, an initiative introduced in August following months of protests from Temu suppliers in China against what they considered unfair penalties from the company that left some bankrupt.

The company has budgeted more than \$1 billion for its

fee-reduction program for the coming year. Over the past quarter, PDD executives said it has rolled out initiatives including service fee funds, lower security deposits and an easier fund-withdrawal process.

Total costs of revenue increased 48% from the same quarter of 2023 due to increased fulfillment fees and payment processing fees.

Zhao said the company has invested heavily in compliance, aiming to remove "bad actors" and empower top performers.

J.P. Morgan analysts wrote in a Nov. 12 note that China's e-commerce market has entered a slow-growth stage where industry competition will be less cutthroat due to a slowdown in live-streaming e-commerce on short-video platforms. But they expect PDD to continue to gain market share and outperform rivals by leveraging its low-price offerings.

The bargain site faces heightened regulatory scrutiny in Europe, including a European Commission's probe over suspicions that illegal products are sold on its platform.

Earlier this month, European authorities notified Temu of practices on its platform that infringe EU consumer law, such as displaying misleading information.



This is the second quarter in a row PDD missed analysts' views.